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Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century": review of mainstreaming in organizations of the United Nations system**

Joint work plan of the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights

Report of the Secretary-General

Summary

The present report contains the joint work plan for the Office of the Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights for 2001, as well as an assessment of the implementation of the work plan for 2000. It is submitted to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-fifth session and to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-seventh session, in accordance with Commission on Human Rights resolution 2000/46.

* E/CN.4/2001/1.
** E/CN.6/2001/1.

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I. Introduction

1. Based on Commission on the Status of Women resolution 39/5 of 31 March 1995 and Commission on Human Rights resolution 1997/43 of 11 April 1997, a joint work plan has been prepared annually for the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (see E/CN.4/2000/118-E/CN.6/2000/8). In resolution 2000/46 of 20 April 2000, the Commission on Human Rights welcomed cooperation and coordination between the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights aimed at mainstreaming women's human rights, such as the joint work plan, encouraged the Secretary-General to ensure its implementation, reflecting all aspects of work under way and the lessons learned to identify obstacles and areas for further collaboration, and requested that it be made available to the Commission on Human Rights at its fifty-seventh session and to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-fifth session. The present report has been prepared in accordance with that request.

II. Assessment of the implementation of the current work plan

2. During the implementation of the current joint work plan (E/CN.4/2000/118-E/CN.6/2000/8), the exchange of information between the Office of the High Commissioner, the Office of the Special Adviser and the Division for the Advancement of Women continued. In the course of the year, the Special Adviser met a number of times with the High Commissioner and the Deputy High Commissioner to discuss matters of mutual interest, including the preparations for the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly, entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century" (Beijing+5), which was held from 5 to 9 June 2000, and the implications of the entry into force of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women on 22 December 2000. The Division facilitated the participation of the chairperson of the Commission on the Status of Women at the fifty-sixth session of the Commission on Human Rights. It also facilitated the participation of a representative of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women at the fifty-sixth session of the Commission on Human Rights. The Division also continued to suggest possible trainers on women's rights for the Office's training activities on reporting under international human rights instruments and with respect to other issues, while it worked closely with the Support Services Branch of the Office of the High Commissioner on reporting and other matters relating to human rights treaty bodies.

3. The Office of the High Commissioner submitted a paper, entitled "Building on achievements: women's rights five years after Beijing", to the twenty-third special session of the General Assembly. The paper reaffirmed basic human rights principles, such as the universality and indivisibility of human rights and the principle of equality and non-discrimination and also identified some key issues with regard to women's rights. Among the key issues identified in the paper were: reproductive health rights; gender equality and property; land rights; inheritance; violence against women; gender equality and the family; and trafficking in women and children.

4. On 9 June 2000, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights participated at a panel co-sponsored by the Office of the High Commissioner, the Division for the Advancement of Women and the United Nations Development Fund for Women entitled "Building on Beijing: challenges for meeting women's rights", which called attention to present-day challenges to the full realization of women's rights.

5. The Office of the High Commissioner and the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) collaborated with the Division for the Advancement of Women in organizing the expert group meeting on "Gender and racial discrimination", in Zagreb from 21 to 24 November 2000. The results of the meeting are to be made available to the Commission on the Status of Women at its forty-fifth session in March 2001. In her video-message to the expert group meeting, the High Commissioner indicated that the report of the meeting would be included in the documentation for the next preparatory committee of the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance, which will be held in Durban, South Africa, from 31 August to 7 September 2001.

6. The Office of the High Commissioner collaborated with the Division for the Advancement of Women in the organization of the expert group meeting on the HIV/AIDS pandemic and its gender implications, which was held in Windhoek, Namibia, from 13 to 17 November 2000. The objective of the meeting was to contribute to a better understanding of the interplay between gender and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The results of the meeting included a set of recommendations for the consideration of the Commission on the Status of Women.

7. The Special Adviser on Gender Issues and Advancement of Women, the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner cooperated closely with regard to preparations for the entry into force of the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. A staff member of the Division for the Advancement of Women studied the procedures of the Office of the High Commissioner with respect to communications and inquiry procedures administered by human rights treaty bodies serviced by the Office and observed the procedures of the Human Rights Committee during its sixty-ninth session under the first Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Staff of the Office of the High Commissioner provided input to the preparation of the proposed draft rules of procedure of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women relating to the Optional Protocol to the Convention and also attended the expert meeting held on the proposed draft rules, which was held in Berlin from 27 to 30 November 2000.

8. In this connection, a technical team, comprising staff of the Office of the High Commissioner and the Division for the Advancement of Women, was established in October 2000, with a view to addressing the appropriate servicing of the Committee in its work under the Optional Protocol. The technical team met twice during 2000.

9. The updating of the web sites of the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner (un.org/womenwatch/daw and unhchr.ch) to facilitate access to information related to the human rights of women and to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women allowed the continuation of the timely posting of the reports of States parties submitted under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination

against Women, as well as of the Committee's concluding comments with regard to the consideration of those reports on the Division's web site. Information on the Optional Protocol to the Convention has also been posted on the web site.

10. Cooperation between the Office of the Special Adviser and the Office of the High Commissioner has continued through the exchange of information on the communications procedures of the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights. Efforts have been made to ensure that the communications procedures of both Commissions are, to the extent possible, mutually complementary, and that information between staff servicing these procedures is shared effectively. The Office of the High Commissioner also provided information and commented on the report of the Secretary-General to the Commission on the Status of Women on its communications procedure.

11. The Office of the Special Adviser, the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner continued to support improved cooperation between the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights. Information was shared between both Offices on issues before the Commissions, including with respect to violence against women migrant workers and trafficking in women. The Office of the High Commissioner also provided input into a number of the reports provided by the Division to the General Assembly.

III. Joint work plan for 2001

12. The Office of the High Commissioner, the Office of the Special Adviser and the Division for the Advancement of Women will continue the targeted approach to joint activities that has been consolidated in the course of the implementation of the 2000 work plan. Major emphasis will be placed on supporting the work of human rights treaty bodies and selected special mechanisms and on cooperation between national machineries for the advancement of women and national human rights institutions. Particular efforts will be made to address constraints encountered in the implementation of new and ongoing activities, as well as activities carried over from the 2000 joint work plan.

13. Cooperation between the Office of the High Commissioner, the Office of the Special Adviser and the Division for the Advancement of Women on the work of treaty bodies will continue during 2001. This will include the exchange of documents, reports and the results of the work of the treaty bodies as well as the regular circulation of these documents to the chairpersons and members of the treaty bodies. A particular effort will be made to eliminate remaining technical difficulties and complete the work on the electronic database covering all six-treaty bodies with a view to making it fully operational and accessible for both entities. The web sites of the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner will be further improved to facilitate better communication.

14. The Division will continue to monitor progress in the work of treaty bodies in integrating a gender perspective and will provide gender-specific input for their work. The Division will update the study on integrating a gender perspective into the work of the human rights treaty bodies (HRI/MC/1998/6). The Office of the High Commissioner, the Office of the Special Adviser and the Division for the Advancement of Women will seek to facilitate interaction between the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and other treaty bodies with a

view to enhancing the integration of a gender perspective into their work, including with regard to general comments. In particular, both Offices will seek to ensure that the various "gender focal points" of the treaty bodies are kept informed of the work of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women.

15. Cooperation will continue and be reinforced between the Office of the Special Adviser, the Division for the Advancement of Women and the Office of the High Commissioner, taking into account the entry into force of the Optional Protocol. The technical team on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women will continue to maintain close contact and staff of the Office of the High Commissioner will endeavour to provide further briefing material to members of the Committee on existing communications and inquiry procedures. There will be enhanced use of email, officer to officer contacts, possible secondments, shared use of precedents, procedural guidelines and databases, to the extent that technology and resources permit, with regard to communications and inquiry procedures, which are comparable to those of the Optional Protocol to the Convention. The Office of the High Commissioner, the Office of the Special Adviser and the Division for the Advancement of Women will work to organize regular interaction between members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women and members of other human rights treaty bodies dealing with communications and inquiry procedures. Steps will be taken to facilitate the attendance of several members of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women at the meetings of the Human Rights Committee during its seventy-first session, where communications will be considered.

16. The Division for the Advancement of Women will provide targeted input for the work of non-conventional human rights mechanisms, in particular the Special Rapporteurs of the Commission on Human Rights on the elimination of violence against women, the human rights of migrants, sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and the right to adequate housing and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on the situation of human rights defenders. Cooperation will continue in the exchange of information concerning communications submitted to the Commission on the Status of Women, as well as in the work of the Office of the High Commissioner on a review of the communications procedures of the Commission on Human Rights. The Office of the High Commissioner and the Division for the Advancement of Women will cooperate in the preparation of reports on similar issues to intergovernmental bodies, such as those relating to trafficking in women and girls, violence against women, including with regard to women migrant workers, and traditional practices affecting the health of women and girls.

17. The Office of the High Commissioner and the Division for the Advancement of Women will support and facilitate cooperation between the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Human Rights. This will include participation of chairpersons, as well as of senior staff of the Division and the Office of the High Commissioner at sessions of the Commissions, meetings of the bureaux, exchanges of information on working methods and on actions taken by both Commissions.

18. The Office will continue to participate actively in selected meetings organized by the Division. The Division will contribute to, and participate in, selected meetings of human rights bodies, in particular the meeting of persons chairing treaty bodies and meetings organized by the Office of the High Commissioner. The

Division for the Advancement of Women will participate actively in the meeting on the application of human rights to reproductive and sexual health, which will be convened jointly by the Office of the High Commissioner and the United Nations Population Fund from 25 to 27 June 2001, as follow-up to the 1996 Glen Cove Roundtable on Human Rights Approaches to Women's Health with a Focus on Reproductive and Sexual Health and Rights.

19. Both the Office of the Special Adviser and the Office of the High Commissioner will also continue to cooperate in the framework of the Inter-Agency Committee on Women and Gender Equality of the Administrative Committee on Coordination.

20. The Office of the Special Adviser and the Office of the High Commissioner will organize a workshop in the summer of 2001, in Hong Kong, China, with the participation of representatives from national machineries for women and women's rights institutions. This workshop will seek opportunities to identify common interests, concerns and strategies and assess opportunities for cooperation.

21. The Office of the High Commissioner, the Office of the Special Adviser and the Division for the Advancement of Women will work together in the organization of a workshop on the integration of gender perspectives into the work of the thematic mandates. A three-day workshop will be conducted for officers of the Office of the High Commissioner servicing the thematic mandates. The workshop will take place in Geneva in the fall of 2001.

22. The Office of the High Commissioner and the Division for the Advancement of Women will conduct a review of the integration of gender issues in the reports presented to the Commission on Human Rights by the thematic mechanisms since 1996.

23. In addition, the Office of the High Commissioner and Division for the Advancement of Women will work together to operationalize the General Assembly omnibus resolution on racism, which calls upon the World Conference against Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance to stress the importance of systematically taking a gender perspective into account throughout the preparations for and in the outcome of the conference (resolution 55/84, para. 17). To this end, the Office of the High Commissioner and the Office of the Special Adviser will explore ways and means of ensuring that the outcomes of all four regional meetings and regional expert seminars reflect their concern regarding the impact of all forms of racism and racial discrimination on women.